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Top Secret

(16)



MEMORANDUM

DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

The Situation in Vietnam

OSD review completed

NSA review completed

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Information as of 1600
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HIGHLIGHTS

Extensive improvements are being made to the North Vietnam portion of the rail line linking Hanoi with Yunnan Province in China.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: A "huge explosion" on the Saigon River was caused by security guards firing on a floating mine near a strategic bridge northeast of Saigon (Para. 1). A Popular Force outpost in the Mekong Delta was overrun early on 9 December with 21 South Vietnamese reported killed and 13 wounded (Para. 2). COSVN has urged subordinates to take measures to prevent desertions (Paras. 3-6). The Viet Cong have increased their propaganda effort throughout South Vietnam since August (Paras. 7-8).

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American and South Vietnamese prisoners have been reported being moved toward Cambodian territory by two Viet Cong companies (Paras. 13-14). Weekly review of South Vietnam battle statistics (Para. 15).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: There is no evidence thus far of any publicly adverse political reaction to Tran Van Van's assassination (Paras. 1-3).

III. North Vietnamese Military Developments:

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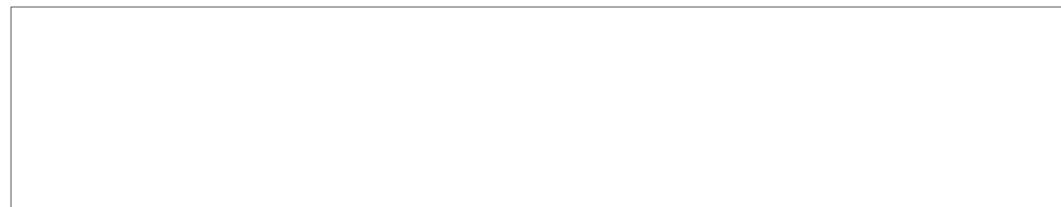
Intercepted communications reveal that some 25 North Vietnamese pilots have recently been moved from Phuc Yen to Gia Lam Airfield (Paras. 3-5).

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V. Communist Political Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

VI. Other Major Aspects: Extensive improvements are being made to the Lao Cai - Hanoi railroad (Paras. 1-4).

ANNEX:

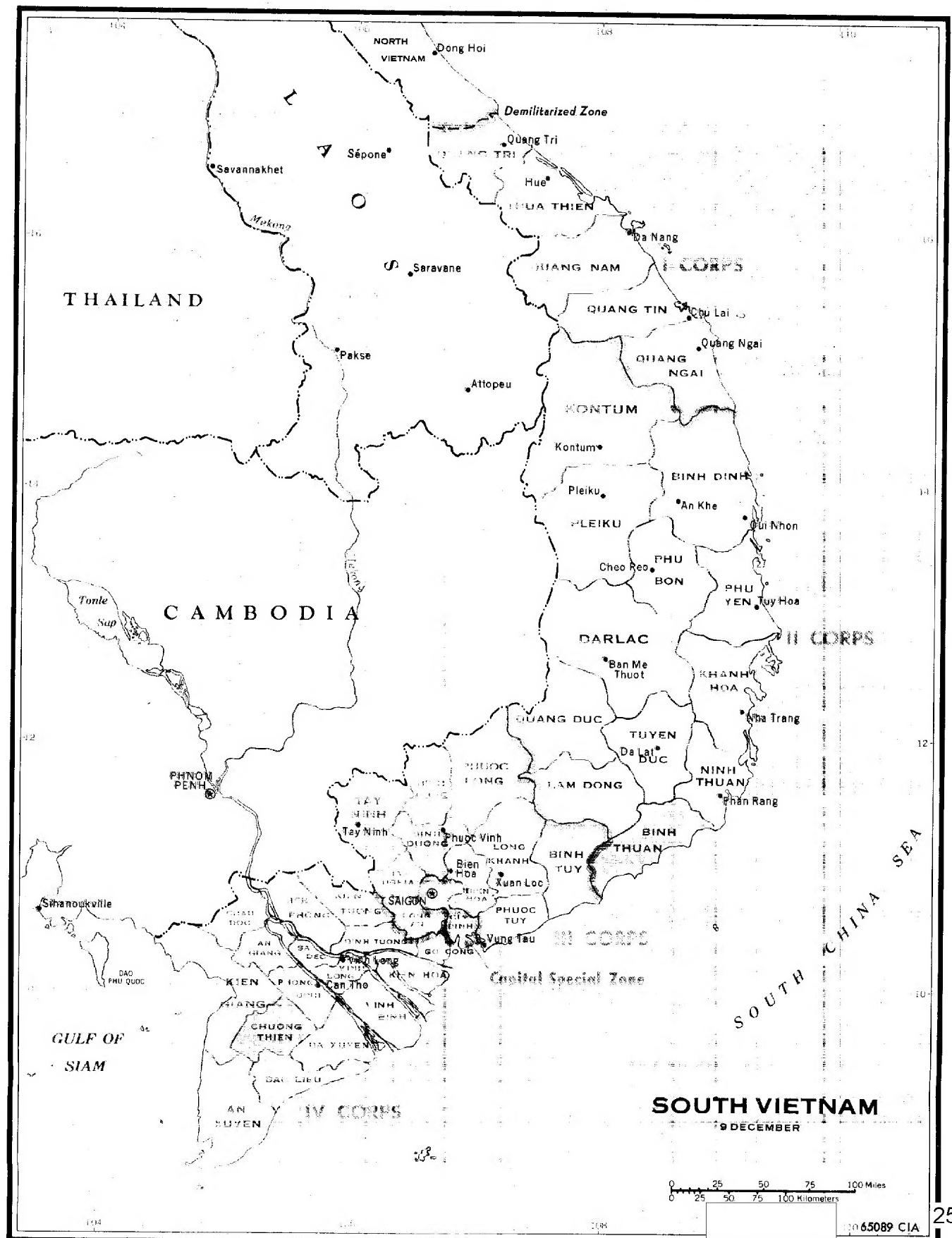
South Vietnam Battle Statistics

1963 through the week of 27 Nov - 3 Dec 66

- Weapons and Personnel Losses
- Viet Cong Attacks and Incidents

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Bridge security guards patrolling a strategic bridge over the Saigon River about three miles northeast of Saigon on 9 December fired on a suspected floating mine. A "huge explosion" resulted, but initial reports listed no casualties and indicate little damage was caused.

2. A company-size South Vietnamese Popular Force outpost, located 115 miles southwest of Saigon in the Mekong Delta province of Chuong Thien was attacked and overrun by a Communist force of unknown size early on 9 December. Friendly losses included 21 killed, 13 wounded, and 22 missing. Also lost were 31 rifles and various pieces of communications equipment. Enemy casualties are unknown.

Viet Cong Concern Over Desertions

3. The Viet Cong Military Intelligence Bureau (MIB) of the Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN), the supreme command authority for the Viet Cong in South Vietnam, has recently revealed concern over desertions from its ranks and the success of the allied psychological warfare program.

6. The Communists apparently are becoming increasingly concerned with the effectiveness of the allied psychological warfare effort. An indication of the effectiveness of the campaign is that this year 17,726 defectors had returned to government control as of 30 November, with an all-time high monthly total of 2,505 returning during the month of November.

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Viet Cong Propaganda Efforts Increase Since August

7. Communications activity on the Viet Cong Liberation News Agency (LNA) network since August 1966 indicates that the Viet Cong have increased their propaganda efforts throughout South Vietnam.

8. During the months of September and October, a substantial increase in the volume of propaganda disseminated by the main office of the LNA was noted. Most of this information was directed to all National Liberation Front organizations in the country in an apparent attempt to raise the morale of the Viet Cong and also to gain additional support from the Vietnamese populace.

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US and ARVN Prisoners Reported Moving Toward Cambodia

13. Early in December, two Viet Cong companies were moving 16 American and 31 South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) prisoners from an area in Binh Duong Province to Cambodia, according to a MACV report. They reportedly will remain there while American operations are being conducted in their former base area. The American prisoners were dressed in black pajamas, locally made canvas shoes, and had long hair and beards. Their hands were tied and they appeared to be very heavily guarded.

14. Although the reliability of the report was not indicated, it is questionable that the Viet Cong actually plan to establish a prisoner camp in Cambodia. Previous reports from escaped captives have indicated that the Viet Cong do move prisoner camps occasionally to avoid possible confrontation with allied military maneuvers.

Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics

15. The week of 27 November - 3 December compared with 20-26 November:

I. Viet Cong Incidents

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>At-tacks</u>	<u>Regimental size</u>	<u>Battalion size</u>
20-26 Nov	22	0	1
27 Nov - 3 Dec	13	0	0
<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Company size</u>	<u>Harassment</u>	<u>Terrorism</u>
20-26 Nov	0	350	33
27 Nov - 3 Dec	2	285	18

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<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Sabotage</u>	<u>Propa-ganda</u>	<u>Anti-Aircraft</u>	<u>Total Incidents</u>
20-26 Nov	35	18	225	683
27 Nov - 3 Dec	29	19	170	534

II. Casualties

	<u>VC/NVA</u>			<u>GVN</u>		
	<u>20-26 Nov</u>	<u>27 Nov</u>	<u>3 Dec</u>	<u>20-26 Nov</u>	<u>27 Nov</u>	<u>3 Dec</u>
Killed	1,422		1,181	159		139
Wounded	-----		-----	428		373
Missing/ Captured	<u>133</u>		<u>162</u>	<u>41</u>		<u>14</u>
TOTALS	1,555		1,343	628		526

	<u>US</u>			<u>FREE WORLD</u>		
	<u>20-26 Nov</u>	<u>27 Nov</u>	<u>3 Dec</u>	<u>20-26 Nov</u>	<u>27 Nov</u>	<u>3 Dec</u>
Killed	143		43	26		8
Wounded	703		521	51		39
Missing/ Captured	<u>2</u>		<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>		<u>0</u>
TOTALS	848		570	81		47

III. Weapons Captured

	<u>VC/NVA</u>			<u>GVN</u>		
	<u>20-26 Nov</u>	<u>27 Nov</u>	<u>3 Dec</u>	<u>20-26 Nov</u>	<u>27 Nov</u>	<u>3 Dec</u>
Individual Crew-Served	369		Not Reported	183		102
	<u>31</u>			<u>0</u>		<u>2</u>
TOTALS	400			183		104

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. The Constituent Assembly has recessed, probably until Monday, 12 December, after having discussed steps to be taken in the wake of Tran Van Van's assassination. The assembly appointed a 20-man committee to plan Van's funeral, instructed another committee to cooperate with government agencies investigating the case, and asked the Saigon city council to change the name of Tu Do Street to Tran Van Van Street. It also drafted a communiqué denouncing the crime, which was attributed to "antidemocratic elements" rather than to the Viet Cong specifically. Assembly chairman Phan Khac Suu, however, was quoted in the Vietnam press as directly blaming the Viet Cong.

2. Premier Ky made a nationwide radio address the evening of 9 December relating to Van's assassination. He recounted past political murders by the Viet Cong, and eulogized Van as one who had opposed the Diem regime and had many achievements in protecting freedom.

3. Meanwhile, the Viet Cong's Liberation Radio has echoed Hanoi's reaction on Van's death by deliberately misconstruing Western press speculation on non-Communist political repercussions to implicate the Thieu-Ky regime in Van's murder.

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III. NORTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

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Battalion-size units of the 324th and 341st divisions are still believed to be south of the Demilitarized Zone. They may, however, only be engaged in a reconnaissance or information gathering role. Nevertheless, their presence there has been confirmed by MACV as recently as early November, when two battalions of the 341st Division were known to be in Quang Tri Province.

DRV Pilots Shifted to Gia Lam

3. The DRV Air Force may have transferred 25 of its estimated 124 combat-ready jet pilots to Hanoi/Gia Lam Airfield in mid-November, according to SIGINT reports. The pilots are believed to have come from Phuc Yen Airfield, North Vietnam's principal fighter base located about 15 miles northwest of the capital. Hanoi/Gia Lam is situated directly across the Red River from Hanoi and has customarily been used for air transport operations. Twelve MIG-15/17 fighters are known to be based at this airfield at present.

4. Gia Lam - based fighters have been active during the past week in attempting to oppose US air strikes in the Hanoi area. It is possible that the DRV Air Force has transferred some of its fighter strength from Phuc Yen to Gia Lam to effect a dispersal of forces and to provide a better defense for the capital. Transfers of this sort have occurred on a

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smaller scale in the past when targets in the immediate area of Hanoi have been threatened.

5. It is also possible that the transfer of the North Vietnamese pilots may be connected with the arrival of the North Korean pilot contingent at Phuc Yen. The 25 DRV pilots are believed to have moved to Gia Lam between 15 and 24 November; the 21 Koreans believed to be at Phuc Yen were first noted flying on 22 November. Base-loading factors or operational considerations could also explain the shift in personnel.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

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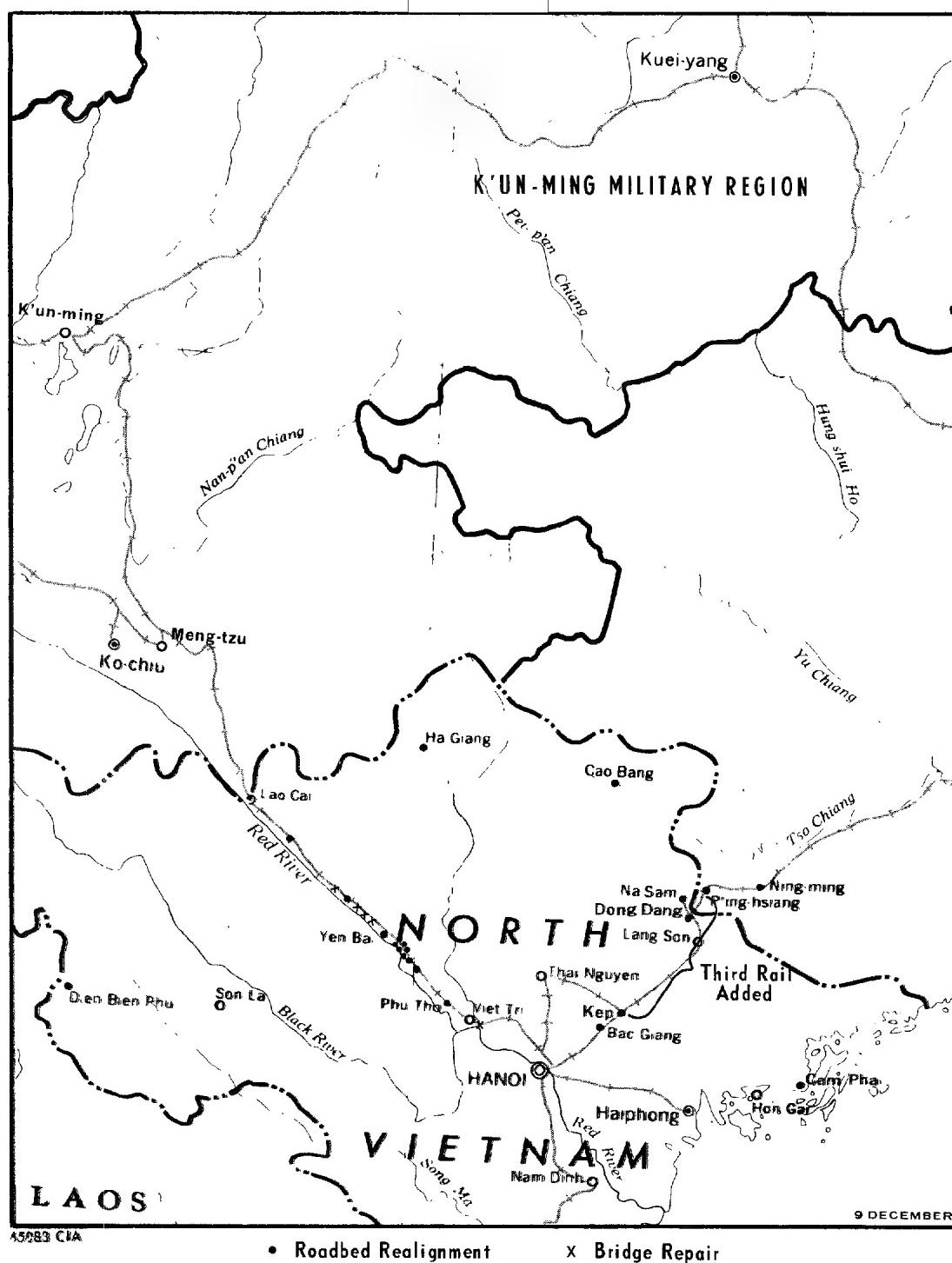
V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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VI. OTHER MAJOR ASPECTS

1. Extensive improvements are being made to the Lao Cai - Hanoi Railroad, apparently to ready it as an alternate line for rail deliveries from or through China.

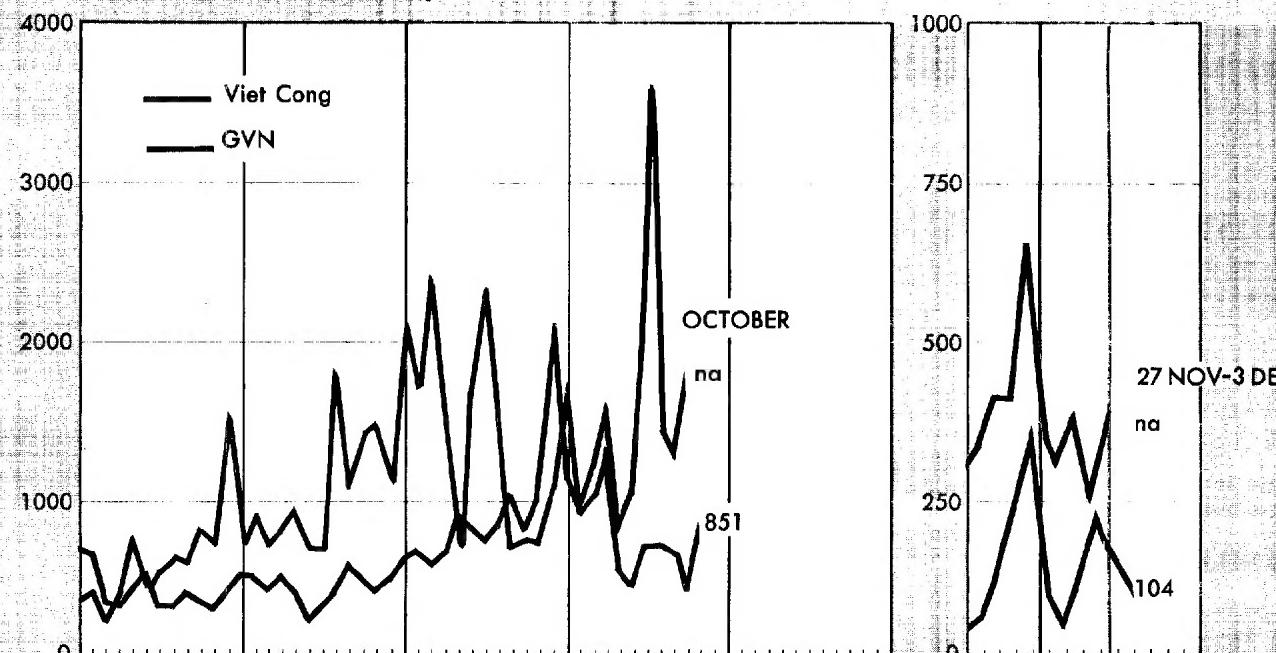
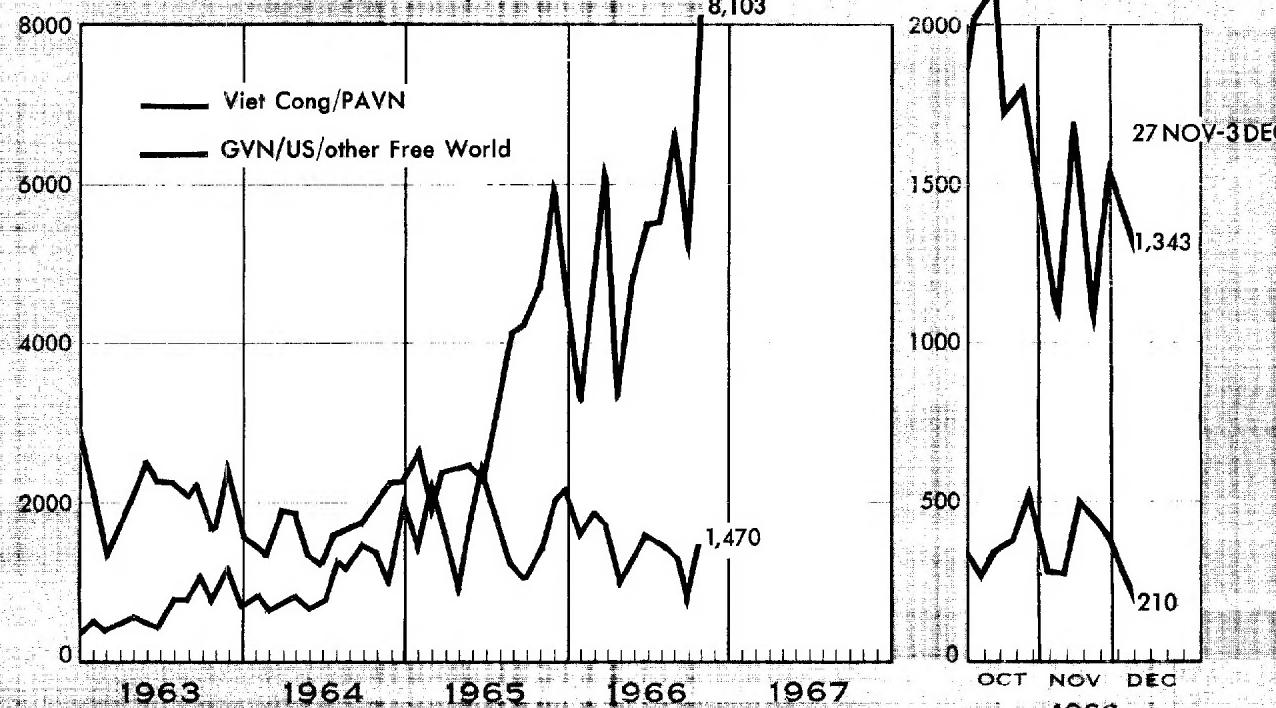
2. Photography of 6 November reveals that curves at at least ten locations on this 170-mile line are being reduced and that five bridges hit by US attacks have been recently repaired. This activity contrasts with previous comparative neglect of the line. Since US attacks began, the most extensive railroad repair and improvement projects have been on the Hanoi - Ping-hsiang Railroad, which has handled virtually all rail deliveries from China. The roadbed has been improved and alternate bridges have been added to the Ping-hsiang line and a third rail has been laid over half its length to enable use of standard-gauge equipment.

3. The neglect of the Lao Cai line has probably been because of the relative unimportance of the Lao Cai Railroad as a supply line from China until the Kuei-yang - Kun-ming Railroad in China was completed--although not fully operational--in early 1966. Until then, the Lao Cai Railroad was not connected to the main Chinese railroad system and could conveniently handle only supplies originating from Yunnan Province, an undeveloped area of China. In addition, the Chinese logistics troops who are believed to be performing most work on railroads in northern North Vietnam have until recently been occupied in improving the Ping-hsiang Railroad.

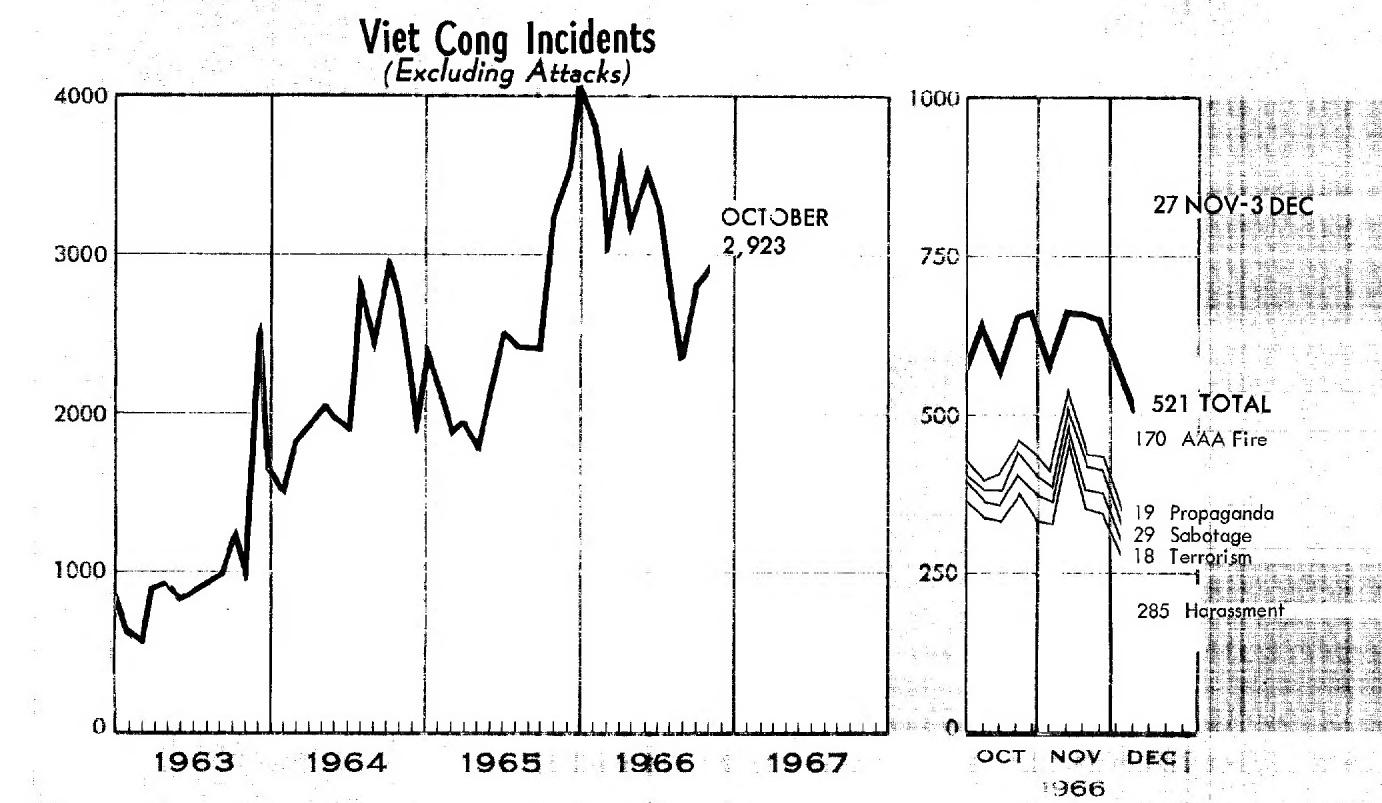
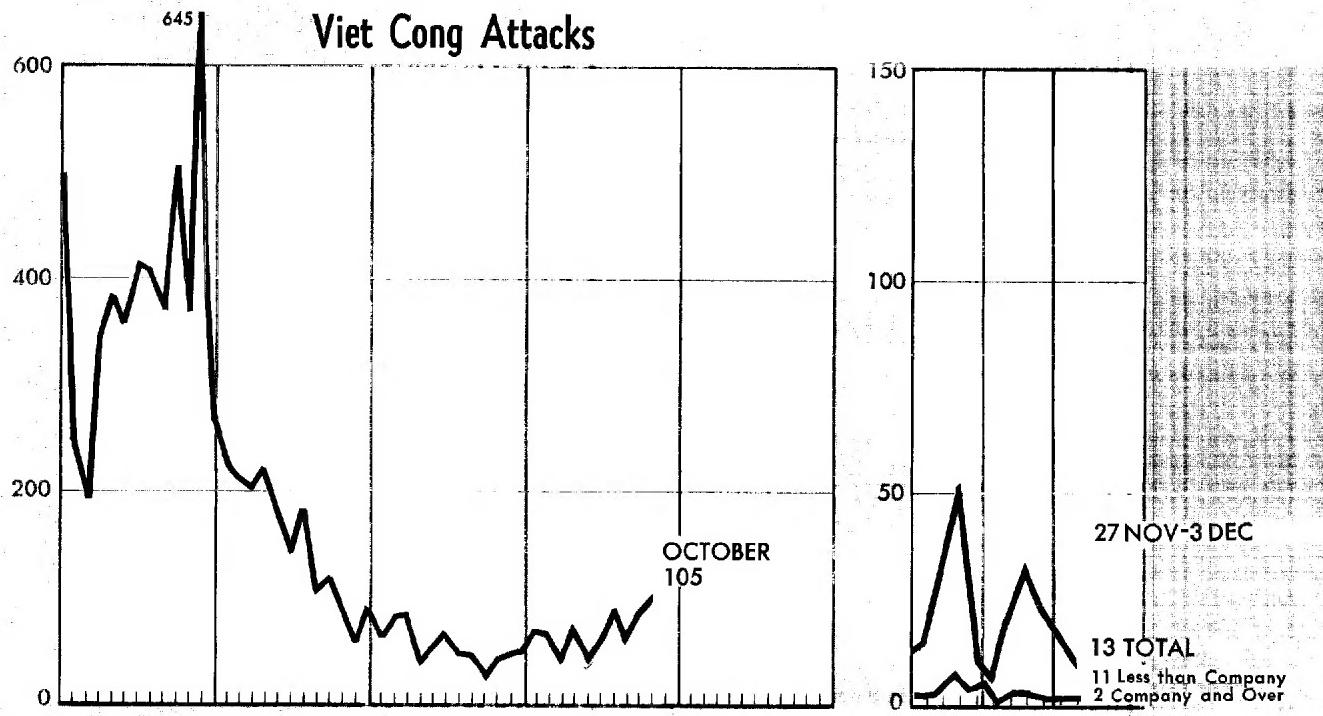
4. There does not seem to be an urgent need for an alternate rail supply line at the present time since the Ping-hsiang line is estimated to be handling prevailing levels of aid deliveries without strain. The preparation of alternate transport facilities has, however, been a long-apparent policy of the North Vietnamese.

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SECRET**Weapons Losses****Personnel Losses
(Excluding Wounded)**

US Casualties to Date: Killed 6,151 Wounded 35,681 Captured 91 Missing 370

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